

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 were examined in the above-identified application. Claims 14-42 have been withdrawn and canceled as claims directed to a non-elected group. The Examiner has indicated that claims 6-7 and 9-13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1, 8, 11, and 12 have been amended. Claims 43-71 are added. No new matter has been added by these amendments. Examination and reconsideration of all pending claims are respectfully requested.

Correction of Typographical Errors

Applicants have amended dependent claims 11 and 12 to correct typographical errors. No new matter has been added, and such amendments do not narrow the scope of the claims.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §102

Claims 1-4 and 8 are rejected as being anticipated by Bonnell. Claims 1-5 are rejected as being anticipated by Ibe. Claims 1-4 are rejected as being anticipated by Broome. Such rejections are overcome as follows.

The Examiner indicated that claims 6, 7, and 9-13 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

To expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 6 and have amended independent claim 8 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 10. Consequently, independent claims 1 and 8 should be allowable. For at least the same reasons, dependent claims 2-5, 7, 9, and 11-13 should also be allowable.

Added Claims

To more fully claim the novel aspects of the present invention, Applicants have added claims 43-71.

Added independent claims 43 corresponds to an independent form of original dependent claim 7. Since the Examiner indicated that dependent claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, added independent claim 43 is allowable. For at least the same reasons, added dependent claims 44-48 are also allowable.

Added independent claim 49 corresponds to an independent form of original dependent claim 9. Since the Examiner indicated that dependent claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, added independent claim 49 is allowable. For at least the same reasons, added dependent claims 50-53 are also allowable.

Added independent claim 54 corresponds to an independent form of original dependent claim 11. Since the Examiner indicated that dependent claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, added independent claim 54 is allowable. For at least the same reasons, added dependent claims 55-57 are also allowable.

Added independent claim 58 corresponds to an independent form of original dependent claim 12. Since the Examiner indicated that dependent claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, added independent claim 58 is allowable. For at least the same reasons, added dependent claims 59-61 are also allowable.

Added independent claim 62 recites an endoscope that comprises a shaft having a distal portion adjacent a distal end and a proximal portion adjacent a proximal end. An objective lens system is disposed along the distal portion. An ocular lens system is disposed along the proximal portion, the ocular lens system comprising a lens. A relay lens system is disposed along the shaft between the objective lens system and the ocular lens system. The relay lens system is separated from the objective lens system by an objective-relay gap and the relay lens system is separated from the ocular lens system by an ocular-relay gap. Intermediate image(s) are formed in at least one of the objective lens system, ocular lens system and relay lens system. No intermediate image is formed in the objective-relay gap and the ocular-relay gap.

Since the Examiner indicated in the 'statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter' that the prior art of record fails to show or suggest"no intermediate image is disposed within the objective- or ocular-relay gap", added independent claim 62 should

be allowable over the cited art. For at least the same reasons, dependent claim 63-67 should also be allowable over the cited art.

Finally, added independent claim 68 recites an endoscope that comprises a shaft having a distal portion adjacent a distal end and a proximal portion adjacent a proximal end. An objective lens system is disposed along the distal portion. An ocular lens system is disposed along the proximal portion, the ocular lens system comprising a lens. A relay lens system is disposed along the shaft between the objective lens system and the ocular lens system. An intermediate image is formed in an optical element in the ocular lens system. None of the cited references show or suggest an endoscope that forms an intermediate image in the optical element in the ocular lens system. For at least that reason, added independent claim 68 is allowable over the cited references. For at least the same reasons, dependent claims 69-71 are also allowable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 206-467-9600.

Respectfully submitted,

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